

Daniel P. Vrakas
County Executive



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Vrakas Brings Stakeholders Together
Making UW-Waukesha an Administration Priority**

WAUKESHA – Out of concern for the Waukesha County property taxpayers, County Executive Dan Vrakas is calling for a roundtable discussion in January on the future of the University of Wisconsin – Waukesha (UWW) with its stakeholders to build consensus on the potential merger or alliance with the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee.

“Many different officials have been convening independently to discuss the fate of the UW – Waukesha,” said Vrakas. “Whereas everyone agrees that higher education is of great importance to the economic vitality of our area, it is my goal to effectively communicate a regional vision for state policy makers to consider what is best for Waukesha County taxpayers.”

UWW is one of 13 two-year campuses within the UW System that was originally designed to provide residents with access to a university when space was limited at 4-year institutions.

“Wisconsin is one of only a handful of states nationwide that still has this 2-year higher education model,” said Vrakas. “We need to ask the difficult question of whether we are giving Waukesha County residents the best possible higher educational opportunities.”

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“Vrakas Brings Stakeholders Together,” continued...

Unlike 4-year UW campuses, the 2-year centers are partially funded with local property taxes. At UWW, the UW System pays for staffing and programming while county residents pay for facility maintenance and improvements.

Vrakas said, “Over the years, the county has invested millions of dollars into the facilities at UW-Waukesha. Before we spend more money renovating the campus, I feel that it is important to clearly define the mission and vision for the institution. ”

UWW is the largest 2-year campus in the state with enrollment nearly matching or exceeding that of UW-Superior, which is a 4-year campus.

“Many people do not know that personal income in the metropolitan Milwaukee area is 12% less than the national average, and that only 23% of the residents in Wisconsin have 4-year degrees,” said Vrakas. “It is important for us as a community to embrace changes at UW-Waukesha so that we can begin to combat the ‘braindrain’ that stifles what could be a flourishing epicenter for business in the midwest and across the nation.”

Currently, the UW System is conducting a study on how the state’s public university system can best meet the growing higher education and research needs in the county. It focuses on accessibility, affordability and increasing the number of people that hold 4-year degrees. For more about the study, visit <http://www.wisconsin.edu/waukesha/>.

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